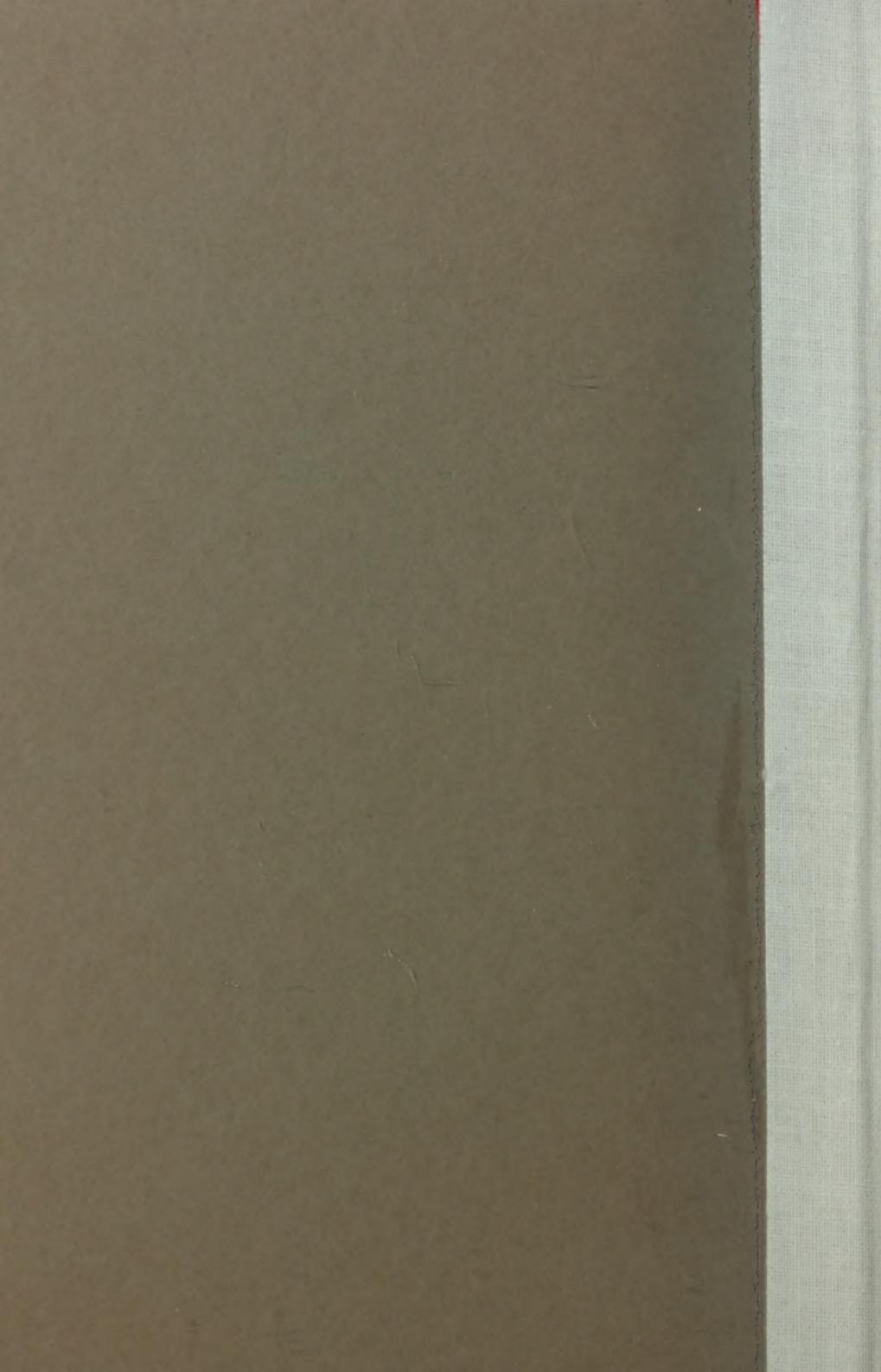


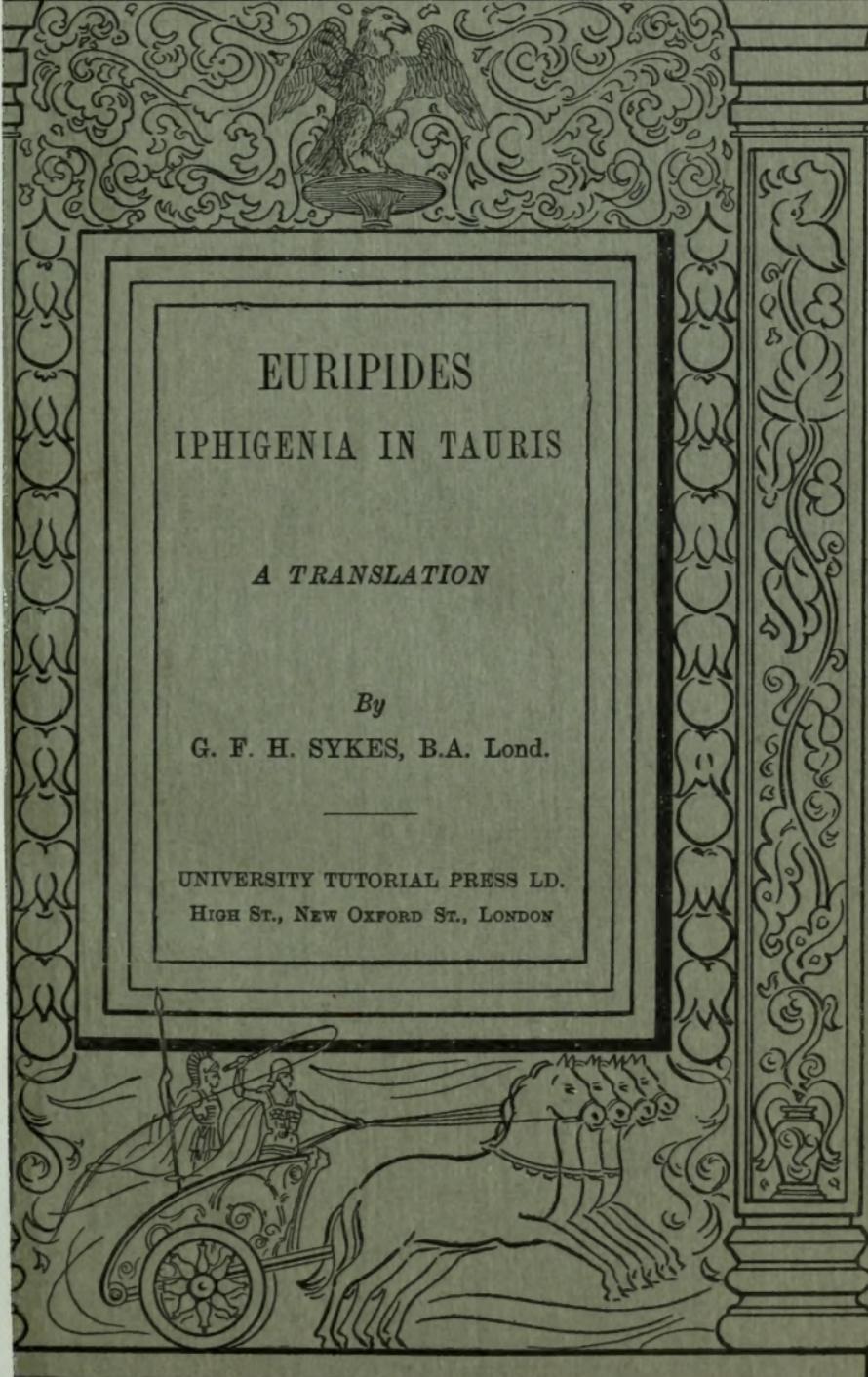
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Euripides
Iphigenia in Tauris

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EURIPIDES

IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS

A TRANSLATION

By

G. F. H. SYKES, B.A. Lond.

UNIVERSITY TUTORIAL PRESS LTD.
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EDITIONS OF LATIN AND GREEK CLASSICS.

The Text is in all cases accompanied by Introduction and Notes: books marked (*) contain also an alphabetical Vocabulary.

The Word Lists are in order of the Text and are preceded by Test Papers.

	Word Text. List.		Word Text. List.		
AESCHYLUS—		DEMOSTHENES—			
Eumenides.	3/0	1/3	Androton.	6/0	...
Persae.	3/0	...			
Prometheus Vinctus.	3/0	...			
Septem contra Thebas	3/0	1/3			
CAESAR—		EURIPIDES—			
Civil War, Book 1.	2/0	...	Alcestis.	2/6	1/3
Civil War, Book 3.	3/0	1/3	Andromache.	3/0	...
Gallic War, Books 1-7 (each) *	2/0	1/0	Bacchae.	4/0	...
Gallic War, Book 1, Ch. 1-29.	1/6	...	Hecuba.	2/0	...
The Invasion of Britain, Gallic War, Book 4 (Ch. 20)—5 (Ch. 24).	*2/0	1/0	Hippolytus.	4/6	1/3
CICERO—		Iphigenia in Tauris.	4/0	...	
De Amicitia.	*2/0	1/0	Medea.	2/6	...
De Finibus, Book 1.	3/6	...	HERODOTUS—		
De Finibus, Book 2.	4/6	...	Book 3.	4/6	...
De Officiis, Book 3.	3/0	1/3	Book 4, Ch. 1-144.	4/6	1/3
De Senectute.	*2/0	1/0	Book 6.	...	1/3
In Catilinam I.-IV.	3/0	...	Book 8.	4/6	...
In Catilinam *I., III. (each)	2/0	1/0	HOMER—		
Philippic II.	3/6	1/3	Iliad, Book 24.	3/0	...
Pro Archia.	2/0	1/0	Odyssey, Books 13, 14.	3/0	...
Pro Cluentio.	4/0	1/3	Odyssey, Book 17.	...	1/3
Pro Lege Manilia.	*2/0	1/3	HORACE—		
Pro Marcello.	2/6	1/0	Epistles (including <i>Ars Poetica</i>).	4/6	...
Pro Milone.	3/0	1/3	Epistles (excluding <i>Ars Poetica</i>).	...	1/3
Pro Plancio.	4/0	1/3	Epistles, Book 1.	2/0	...
Pro Rege Deiotaro.	2/6	...	Epodes.	2/0	...
Pro S. Roscio Amerino.	3/0	1/3	Odes, Books 1-4.	*4/6	...
Somnium Scipionis.	2/6	...	Separately, each Book	*2/0	1/0
		Satires.	4/6	1/3	

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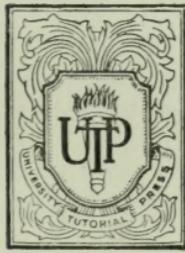
IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS

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EURIPIDES: IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS.

A TRANSLATION.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

IPHIGENIA.	ATTENDANTS.
ORESTES.	THOAS.
PYLADES.	MESSENGER.
OXHERD.	ATHENA.

Chorus of GREEK CAPTIVE WOMEN.

Enter IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA. Pelops the son of Tantalus, coming to Pisa by the swiftness of his mares, wedded Oenomaus' maid, from whom Atreus sprang. Now Atreus had two sons, Menelaus and Agamemnon; and from the latter I had my being, Iphigenia, child of Tyndareus' daughter, whom, hard by the eddies that oftentimes Euripus churns, whirling the dark blue sea with close-following gusts, my father, as men deem, slew for Helen's sake at Artemis' in Aulis' famous bays.

10. For there it was that King Agamemnon gathered a Hellenic fleet of a thousand ships, meaning the Achaeans to take the wreath of fair victory over Ilium and to avenge Helen's outraged wedlock, in kindness to Menelaus. But amid dire stress of weather, meeting with no favouring breezes, he came to the flame-omens, and Calchas spake on this wise: "Thou that art king of this Hellenic host, Agamemnon, thou shalt not unmoor thy ships from land till Artemis receive thy child Iphigenia, slaughtered with

the knife; for whatever the year gave birth to fairest of all, thou didst vow to offer to the goddess bringer of light. A daughter then in thy house thy spouse Clytemnestra bore (for he assigned to me the prize of beauty), whom it behoves thee to offer." And by Odysseus' wiles they took me from my mother on a show of wedding with Achilles; but, arrived at Aulis, I the unhappy was held aloft above the altar and was like to have been slain with the sword; but Artemis stole me, giving the Achaeans a deer in my place, and through the bright heaven she wafted me, and set me in this land of the Tauri, where a foreign king rules the land amid a foreign race, Thoas, who, for that he ran with the speed of wings, attained the name for his swiftness. And in this temple she set me as priestess; wherefore, according to the rites with which the goddess Artemis is pleased (rites of a festival whose name alone is fair; but for the rest I am dumb, in fear of the goddess)—I sacrifice, for so has been the custom of the state even from former days, whatever man of Hellas comes to shore on this land. I indeed but first cut the lock, but others have charge of the deeds of blood unspeakable within these halls of the goddess.

42. New visions which the night has come bringing I will tell to the clear sky, if indeed this be any remedy. In sleep methought that, released from this land, I was dwelling in Argos and was sleeping amidst my maidens, and that earth's ridges were shaken with a sea-swell, and methought I was fleeing, and from outside looked upon the coping of the house as it fell, and all the roof hurled in ruins to the ground from the topmost capitals. But one pillar alone was left, as it seemed to me, of my ancestral halls, and methought there fell from its capitals golden hair; that it took the voice of man; and that I, duly honouring the office of slaughtering strangers that is mine, sprinkled him as doomed to die, weeping the while. This dream then thus I put together. Orestes is dead, from whom I cut the first lock of hair. For pillars of the house are male children; and they die whomsoe'er my lustrations touch. Nor, again, can I connect the dream with friends; for Strophius had no son in the day when I well nigh perished.

61. Now, therefore, I am fain to make a drink-offering for my brother, I that am present here for one afar off; for this I can do, with the attendants whom the king gave me, women of Hellas. But seeing that from some cause they are not yet here, I will go within the house in which I dwell, even this temple of the goddess. [Exit.

Enter ORESTES and PYLADES.

OESTRES. Look thou, be on thy guard lest any mortal is on our path.

PYLADES. I look, and am searching, turning my eye everywhere.

OR. Pylades, seems it to thee that these are the halls of the goddess, for which we fitted out from Argos our sea-faring ship?

PYL. To me it seems so, Orestes; and thou must deem the like.

OR. And is this the altar whence Greek blood drips?

PYL. At any rate it has its copings red with the sheddings of blood.

OR. And 'neath the very cornice seest thou spoils hung up?

PYL. Yes, first-fruits of the strangers who have died. But thou must cast thine eye about and search thoroughly.

77. OR. O Phoebus, to what end didst thou bring me again into this net with thine oracle, after I had, by slaying my mother, avenged a father's blood and was ever being driven by successive chase of Furies, a fugitive, an outcast from the land, and had fulfilled many courses returning upon themselves. So I came and asked thee how I should win to the end of my whirling madness and my toils, which I wrought out roaming through Hellas. And thou didst bid me go to the bounds of the Tauric land, where Artemis, thy sister, has altars, and take the goddess's image, which they say fell here into this shrine from heaven; and when I had taken it either by wiles or by some chance, having risked the danger to the full, to present it to the Athenians' land; but for the sequel nothing further was uttered;

and after doing this I was to have some respite from my toils.

93. So, obedient to thy words, I am come hither to a country unknown, unfriendly. And I enquire of thee, Pylades, for thou art co-partner with me in this toil, what shall we do? Thou seest that the girdle of the walls is high: shall we then mount the approaches of the building? How should we then escape notice? Or shall we loosen with levers the bronze-wrought bars of which we know nothing? But if we are caught forcing open the gates and contriving an entrance, we shall die. Come, before we die let us flee on board the ship in which we made our voyage hither.

104. PYL. To flee indeed is not to be borne, nor are we so wont; and we must not cast reproach on the god's oracular bidding. But getting clear of the temple let us hide ourselves in caves which the dark sea washes through with surf, far away from the ship, lest anyone setting eyes on the bark should tell the rulers and then we be taken by force. But when the eye of gloomy night shall come, then, I tell thee, we must dare to take from the shrine the polished image, bringing all contrivances to bear; yes, see where within the triglyphs is an empty space to let one's body down. For noble men dare labours, but cowards are nowhere aught.

OR. Surely it shall not be that we are come a long course by use of oar, and from the goal shall take our homeward road again. Stay, since fitly thou has spoken, we must obey. It behoves us to go to a spot in the land where we shall hide ourselves unnoticed. For no act of mine shall cause the god's word to fall unfulfilled; the deed must be dared, for no amount of toil yields excuse to the young.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter CHORUS.

123. CHORUS. Keep holy silence, O ye that dwell by the Euxine sea's twin meeting rocks.

O daughter of Leto, Dictynna of the mountains, to thy court—the fair-pillared temple's gilded cornices—I, slave of a holy custodian, move a holy virgin foot, having

changed my home from the towers and walled towns of Hellas, land of noble steeds, and from Europe, land of pasture with fair trees, the seat of my fathers' halls.

Enter IPHIGENIA.

I am come. What news? What care hast thou? Why didst thou bring, yea, bring me to the shrines, O child of him who came to Troy's towers with famous fleet of thousand sailors, myriad-weaponed, the fleet of the famous Atridae?

143. IPH. O handmaidens, how am I fallen upon lamentations grievous to lament, elegies in strains of untuneful cry, unmeet for the lyre, ah me! amid my mournful wailings for the blind fates that now befall me, as I bemoan my kinsman for his lost life! such vision of dreams I saw in the night whose darkness has but now passed away!

I am undone, undone! I have no father's house: ah me! my race is blotted out. Alas! alas for the troubles in Argos! Ah, thou fate, ah, thou who robbest me of my only brother, sending him to Hades, for whom I am in act to pour out these libations and the bowl of the departed on the back of earth, and a milk-spring from mountain heifers, and Bacchus' draughts of wine, and tawny bees' labour, which are the appointed offerings to soothe the dead.

Come, give into my hand the vessel all of gold and Hades' draught.

170. O, thou scion of Agamemnon beneath the earth, this do I send to thee as now deceased. Receive it; for I shall not bring to thy tomb my golden hair, I shall not bring tears. For far indeed did I come away from thy country and mine, where in men's thoughts I lie slaughtered, the unhappy victim.

179. CHO. Responsive strains, and an Asiatic melody, a barbaric wail, I will utter to thee, mistress, the music in dirges, such as the dead yearn for, which Hades sounds forth in songs far removed from paeans.

Ah me! the sceptred light of the house of the Atridae is gone—ah me for my father's house! Who of

the glorious kings at Argos has now the sovereignty? But trouble rushes forth from troubles, from the time when with whirling winged mares the sun shifted from his seat and turned elsewhere the sacred eye of light. And from the golden fleeced lamb upon each succeeding generation in our halls came a fresh sorrow, murder upon murder, and woes upon woes; whence it comes that a penalty for the sons of Tantalus slain before goes forth against the house, and the god speeds with fell speed against thee.

203. IPH. From the first an ill-genius to me was the genius of my mother's girdle and of that night; from the first the Fates, goddesses of birth, strained harsh my upbringing—for me, whom the lady wooed by suitors from the Hellenes, Leda's miserable daughter, brought forth in her bower, a firstborn child, and reared to be a victim by a father's outrage, and no joyous sacrifice; yea me, in fulfilment of a vow, in a steed-drawn chariot, they set upon Aulis' sands a bride—ah me!—an ill-starred bride for the son of Nereus' daughter, alas!

218. But now, a guest of an inhospitable sea, I dwell in a barren home, with no bridegroom, no child, no city, no friend, not singing our Hera at Argos, nor amid the sweet-twanging looms weaving with the comb the likeness of Attic Pallas and the Titans, but staining the altars with the bloody doom of strangers, a doom ill-attuned to the lyre—as they utter the piteous sound “Aiai!” and weep piteous tears.

And now of those things indeed have I forgetfulness; but I mourn my brother dead at Argos, whom I left at the breast still a nursling, still young, still a young plant in his mother's arms and at her bosom, Orestes bearer of the sceptre at Argos.

236. CHO. And see here, leaving the sea cliffs, an oxherd is come to make known to thee something new.

Enter the Oxherd.

OXHERD. Child of Agamemnon and Clytaemnestra, hear from me strange tidings.

IPH. And what is there astounding in thy present tale?

OXH. There are come to the land, having shunned with the oar the dark-blue Symplegades, two youths, an offering for sin and a sacrifice dear to the goddess Artemis. And thou canst not too soon make ready the lustral waters and first rites.

IPH. From what land? Of what country is the dress that the strangers wear?

OXH. They are Hellenes. This one thing I know, and nothing further.

IPH. And knowest thou not by hearing the strangers' name to tell it?

OXH. Pylades the one was called by the other.

250. IPH. And the stranger, his yokefellow, what was his name?

OXH. None knows it; for we heard it not.

IPH. But how did ye see them, and fall in with them and capture them?

OXH. Upon the edge of the surf of the unfriendly sea-way.

IPH. Pray what fellowship have oxherds with the sea?

OXH. We came to bathe our oxen in the sea dew.

IPH. Return now to this—how ye took them, and in what manner; for this I mean to hear. For after a long while are they come, nor yet meantime was the goddess' altar empurpled with streams of Greek blood.

260. OXH. When we were forcing our wood-pasturing oxen into the sea that flows in through the Symplegades, there was by us a certain hollow cliff cleft by much washing of the waves, a shelter of purple-mussel fishers. There one oxherd of us saw two youths, and stepped back again, steering his track on tip toe. And he said: "See ye not? Some deities are these sitting here." And one of us, being devout, held up his hands and prayed when he looked upon them: "O Leucothea, son of the sea-nymph guardian of ships, lord Palaemon, prove merciful to us, whether they, the twain that sit on the cliffs, be the Dioscuri or the darlings of Nereus who begat the well-born band of the fifty Nereids." But some other, irreverent, bold in his lawlessness, laughed at the prayers, and said that they were castaway sailors sitting in the ravine

for fear of our custom, having heard that here we sacrifice strangers. Now to the most of us he seemed to speak well, and we deemed it right to catch for the goddess the country's wonted victims.

281. And at this moment one of the strangers, quitting the rock, arose and shook his head up and down, and groaned besides, trembling to his arm-ends, frenzied with madness, and he shouted like a hunter: "Pylades, beholdest thou her here? and seest thou not this other Hell's she-dragon, how she is minded to slay me, armed with dread vipers in array against me? And that other again, from the folds of her dress breathing fire and slaughter, beats with her wings, as it were a rower, holding my mother in her arms, a stony boulder, to throw at me. Ah me! she will slay me; whither am I to flee?" Yet no shapes of form like these were there to see, but he changed in his thoughts the bleatings of calves and the barkings of dogs for the like sounds which they say the Furies utter.

295. But we, cowering as if in fear of death, sat in silence; and he, drawing his sword, rushed into the midst of the heifers like a lion, and pierced with his steel their flanks, thrusting it into their ribs, deeming that thus he warded off the goddesses even the Furies, so that the sea-flood flushed red with blood.

301. And on this each one of us, when he beheld the grazing cattle falling and being destroyed, armed himself, both blowing shells and gathering the country people; for against youthful strangers nobly born we thought oxherds sorry fellows to fight. So we made up a goodly number in a little space. And the stranger fell, ceasing from his fit of madness, his chin dripping with foam. And when we saw him fallen ready to our hand, every man set to work hurling, pelting. Meanwhile the other of the strangers was wiping off the foam and tending him, and held before him for shelter the finely-woven web of his robes, looking out indeed for the wounds that were coming, but ministering to the man his friend with kindly service.

315. And starting up in his senses from his fallen state, the stranger perceived the surge of enemies dashing on him, and the present calamity that was near at hand to

them, and cried, “Ah me!” But we did not abate hurling stones, one pressing hard upon them from one side, another from another; whereat, indeed, we heard that dread encouragement: “Pylades, we shall die, but see to it that we die most nobly. Follow me, drawing with thy hand the sword.” But when we saw the foemen’s two blades brandished, in flight we filled the rugged dells. But if one fled, the others pressed them hard and threw at them; and if they drove off these, again they who but now gave ground hurled stones.

328. But it was past belief—how, from a thousand hands, no one was lucky in hitting the goddess’ destined offerings. And scarcely did we bring them down: not indeed by courage, but forming round them in a ring we stealthily struck the swords from their hands with stones, and they sunk on the knee to the ground with weariness. Then we brought them to the king of this land; and he, looking on them, with all the speed he could sent them to thee for the lustral water and the slaughter bowls.

336. And pray thou, maiden, that such victims from among strangers may be ever here for thee; and if thou takest the life of strangers like these, Hellas will atone for thy murder, paying the penalty for the slaughter at Aulis.

CHO. Wondrous tales thou tellest of him who has appeared, whoever it is that came from the land of Hellas to the inhospitable sea.

342. IPH. So be it! Do thou go and bring the strangers, but the rites here I will care for.

O much enduring heart, before, indeed, thou wast to strangers calm and compassionate ever, granting a meed of tears to kinship’s tie whenever thou didst receive men of Hellas into thy hands; but now, because of the dreams whereby I have been made cruel, being assured that Orestes no longer looks on the sun, ye will find me hard of heart, whoe’er ye be that are come.

351. And this has been found true—I have perceived it, friends: the unfortunate, themselves in evil case, are not well-minded to those of better fortunes. But never yet came a breeze from Zeus, nor a ferry-boat that through the

rocks Symplegades brought away Helen here, who was my undoing, and Menelaus, that I on them might have had my revenge, setting the Aulis here against that yonder, where the Danaidae mastering me by force were at the point to slay me like a heifer, and my father, who begat me, was priest.

361. Woe is me ! for I am not unmindful of my troubles then, how often did I stretch my hands towards my sire's chin and knees, clinging to him, and speaking thus : " O father ! I am made a bride in a shameful bridal at thy hand ; and, while thou art slaying me, my mother and Argive women now chant me in wedding hymns, and all the hall is filled by the flute, even while I perish at thy hand. That Achilles then was Death, and not Peleus' son, whom thou didst put forward as husband to me, and didst convey me by craft on chariot-wheels to a blood-stained marriage." But I, my eyes covered with fine veilings, took not up my brother in my hands, who now has perished, nor joined a kiss with my sister from modesty, for I was to go to Peleus' halls ; and many greetings I put from me till a future time, thinking to come back again to Argos. O much enduring one, if thou art dead, from how fair a state, from a lot how envied for thy father's sake, art thou fallen to ruin, Orestes !

380. But I blame the cavilling of the goddess, who, if a mortal puts his hand to murder, or even touches impurities of childbirth or a corpse, debars him from her altar as though polluted, yet herself is pleased with sacrifices of slain men. It cannot be that Zeus' bride, Leto, could have given birth to so much ignorance. Nay, rather, I judge Tantalus' feast to the gods unworthy of belief, that they were pleased with feeding on a child ; but I deem that the folk here, being themselves manslayers, assign to the divinity their evil practices ; for no one of the gods do I hold to be base.

392. CHO. Dark, dark blue meeting places of the sea, where Io's gadfly, in its flight from Argos, crossed over the inhospitable swell, taking in exchange an Asian land across the sea for Europe. Who of men are they that, leaving the fair-watered rush-green Eurotas, or Dirce's venerable

streams, came yea came to that savage soil, where in honour of Zeus' daughter mortal blood bedews altars and temples pillared around ?

407. Did they with plashing, double rows of pine oars sail their ship's car over ocean waves before the breezes that filled their sails, in eager rivalry to increase wealth for their halls? For fond hope comes to the bane of mortals, insatiable for men who gain them a weight of wealth, wandering over the swell and crossing to barbarous cities in vain expectation; but the judgment of some misses the time for wealth, but to others riches have come even to their hand.

421. How did they pass the rocks that run together, how the sleepless cliffs of the sons of Phineus, racing along beside the ocean strand on Amphitrite's surge, where bands of fifty maidens, Nereus' daughters, sing in the dance with circling feet, as with sail-filling gales the steering oars in their grooves swirl at the stern before breezes from the south or the breaths of Zephyrus; how came they over the inhospitable deep to that land that is the haunt of seafowl, the white strand, the fair race-course of Achilles?

439. Would that at my mistress' prayers Leda's dear daughter Helen might chance to come, leaving the Trojan city, that wreathed around her hair with blood-betokening dew she may die at my mistress' hand that bids her throat be cut, and may pay a counterpoising penalty! Most gladly of all would we welcome the news, if from Hellas' land some one of voyagers had come, stopping the toil of my pitiful slavery: for even in dreams I would fain be in my home and my ancestral city, to enjoy songs of delight, a pleasure shared by the wealthy in company.

456. But here, their hands fast tied with bonds, the pair are coming, the goddess' new offering before the altar. Hush, friends! for the choice first-fruits, in truth, of the Hellenes are here drawing nigh for the temple; nor did the oxherd proclaim false tidings. O, august lady! if this city to thy pleasure offers these to thee, accept sacrifices, unholy in Hellenic eyes, which the custom among us publicly declares that it gives.

Enter ATTENDANTS with ORESTES and PYLADES bound.

IPH. 467. Good! It must be my first care that the goddess' rites be duly performed. Loose the strangers' hands, that, being sacred, they may be no more in bonds. And do ye go within the temple and make ready what is right and wonted in such a case.

(*To Orestes and Pylades.*) Alas! what mother, then, is it that once bore you, who your father, sister, too, if there be such an one?—how noble are the pair of whom she will be bereft and brotherless! Who knows on whom such unkind fate will fall? For all the doings of the gods creep on unseen, and no one knows any evil that may come; for fortune leads men astray to what is hard to understand.

Whence in the world come ye, O unhappy strangers? Since over a long distance, indeed, did ye sail to this land, and long will ye be severed from your homes being in the world below, even for ever.

482. OR. Why lamentest thou thus and art pained over the woes coming to us two, lady, whosoe'er thou art? Noways do I count him wise, whoever, when about to die, seeks to overcome with pity the dread of perishing (nor whoso grieves that Hades is near), hopeless of safety: since two woes he knits together out of one, and is convicted of folly, yet dies none the less. Now fortune we must let alone; but for us sing thou no dirge; for the sacrifices here we know and recognise.

492. IPH. Which then of you two, mentioned here by name, is called Pylades? This, first, I mean to learn.

OR. He stands here, if this is at all to your pleasure to learn.

IPH. Of what Hellenic country born a citizen?

OR. And what wouldest thou gain, lady, by learning this?

IPH. Are you two brothers from one mother?

OR. In fondness, yes; but we are not brothers by birth, lady.

IPH. And on thee what manner of name did the father that begat thee set?

500. OR. Truly my name should have been "Ill-fated."
 IPH. This I ask not; set that name down to fortune.

OR. Dying nameless, I shall not be mocked.

IPH. But why dost grudge this? Or art thou so proud?

OR. 'Tis my body thou shalt sacrifice, not my name.

IPH. Nor wilt thou tell what city is thine?

OR. No, for thou seekest a thing of no profit to one about to die.

IPH. But what stays thee from granting me this favour?

OR. Renowned Argos for my native land I boast.

IPH. By the gods, stranger, art thou indeed sprung from thence?

510. OR. From Mycenae, which once was prosperous.

IPH. And a fugitive didst thou sail from thy country, or by what manner of chance?

OR. Yes. I am a fugitive in some fashion verily, not willing and yet willing.

IPH. And yet, in that thou art from Argos, much longed for was thy coming.

OR. Not by me, but if by thee, 'tis thy care.

IPH. Wilt thou tell me something of what I wish?

OR. So shall I leave my main theme, my own ill fortune.

IPH. Troy perhaps thou know'st of, about which there is talk everywhere.

OR. Would I had never known it, nay nor even seen it in a vision!

IPH. They say that it is no more, and has found its end by the spear.

520. OR. Yes; it is so. Nor did ye hear things unaccomplished.

IPH. And has Helen gone back again to the house of Menelaus?

OR. She is there, coming with ill-luck truly to one of my kin.

IPH. But where is she? For to me too she owes ere now some amends.

OR. At Sparta she dwells with her former consort.

IPH. Oh! hateful sight to Hellenic eyes, and not to me alone.

OR. I, too, in truth tasted the fruit of her marriages.

IPH. And did the Achaeans' return come to pass, as it is reported?

OR. Are all included in thy question?

IPH. Yes; for before thou diest, I wish to reap this knowledge.

530. OR. Examine me, since thou desirest this, and I will speak.

IPH. Did one Calchas, a seer, go back again from Troy?

OR. He has perished, as was said among the men of Mycenæ.

IPH. O august mistress, how well! Why, what of Laertes' offspring?

OR. He has not yet returned home, but is living, so runs the tale.

IPH. May he perish, and find no return to his country!

OR. Make no ill prayer against him: all his fortunes are amiss.

IPH. And the son of Thetis the Nereid, is he still living?

OR. He is not. Vainly he entered on wedlock in Aulis.

IPH. Yes; for it was a deceitful one, as, at least, they say who suffered from it.

540. OR. Who'er art thou? How well thou askest after the news from Hellas!

IPH. I am from thence; when yet a child I was lost.

OR. Rightly then thou wouldest fain know what is there, lady.

IPH. But what of the general, who they say was high in fortune?

OR. Who? Name him, for he whom I know was not of the fortunate.

IPH. Atreus' son he was called, one Agamemnon, the king.

OR. I know not. Leave that tale, lady.

IPH. Say not so, by the gods; but tell me, that I may be cheered, stranger.

OR. He is dead, wretched man, and besides has brought another to ruin.

IPH. He is dead? By manner of mishap? Ah me, unhappy!

550. OR. But why didst thou utter this groan? Surely he had naught to do with thee?

IPH. His happiness, his former happiness, I mourn.

OR. Ay, for terribly has he departed, slaughtered by his wife.

IPH. Oh, needing floods of tears is she who slew and he who was slain.

OR. Cease, and question no further.

IPH. Thus much, at least: whether the miserable man's wife is alive?

OR. She is not. A son whom she bore—he slew her.

IPH. O house utterly confounded! Tell me with what intent, avowedly.

OR. Taking vengeance on her for his father's murder.

IPH. Alas! How well he exacted an ill but just requital!

560. OR. But not with heaven is he prosperous, just though he be.

IPH. And leaves Agamemnon, in his home, offspring beside?

OR. Yes; he has left one girl, Electra.

IPH. But say: is there any talk of a slaughtered daughter?

OR. No, none, except that being dead she does not see the light.

IPH. Miserable is she and the father who slew her.

OR. She perished for an evil woman's thankless sake.

IPH. And lives the dead father's son at Argos?

OR. He lives, poor wretch, nowhere and everywhere.

IPH. False dreams, farewell. Ye were nought after all.

570. OR. Nor are the deities who are called wise less false than winged dreams. Great confusion there is among divine and mortal things alike; but in one thing alone is he grieved, that not from being foolish, but for hearkening to the words of seers, he has perished as he has perished in the eyes of those who know.

CHO. Alas! alas! And what of us, and of our dear sires? Live they? Or live they not? Who can say?

578. IPH. Hear; for I have arrived at a certain plan, speeding your profit, strangers, and mine too; and what is

well would so best be done, if the same deed is pleasing to all. Wouldst thou be willing, if I saved thee, to go to Argos for me, and give some message to my friends there, and to bear a tablet, which some captive wrote in pity for me, not deeming my hand his murderer, but that by the law he died, for that the goddess thinks these deeds just? For I had no one who could go and bear news to Argos again, no one who arriving safely should convey my letters to one of my friends. But do thou, for thou seemest not ill-born, and thou knowest of Mycenae and those whom I too would have thee know, be saved even thou, taking thy life, no mean reward in respect of these trifling letters. But let this man, since the state enforces it, become a sacrifice to the goddess, being parted from thee.

597. OR. Well dost thou say all else, save one thing, stranger lady; for that this man should be slaughtered is to me a grievous burden. For I am he who started the voyage of these calamities; but he sails with me for my troubles' sake. It is not just, therefore, that at the price of his destruction I should find favour and myself escape from misfortune. But thus let it fall out. Give him the tablet, for he will convey it to Argos, that it may be well with thee; and let who will slay me. Most base it is if anyone plunge his friends' cause into calamity and himself abide in safety. But he is a friend whom I would have see the light no less than myself.

609. IPH. O noble spirit, surely thou art sprung from some noble stock and art a right true friend to thy friends! Such may he be, the man who has been left of all my kindred! For not even I, strangers, am without a brother, save that I see him not. But since thou wishest it thus, I will send this man bearing the tablet, and thou shalt die; but some great eagerness for death possesses thee.

617. OR. But who will sacrifice me and dare the dreadful deed?

IPH. I, for I have this duty of worship to the goddess.

OR. Yea, maiden, 'tis a deed unenviable, and far from happy.

IPH. Yes; but I am laid under the necessity, which I must observe.

OR. Wilt thou thyself, a woman, slay men in sacrifice with the sword?

622. IPH. Nay, but I shall sprinkle lustral water about thy hair.

OR. And who then is the slayer? if it is meet for me to ask this?

IPH. Within this house are they who care for this.

OR. And what manner of tomb will receive me when I am dead?

IPH. Sacred fire within, and a yawning gulf of rock.

OR. Alas! Would that a sister's hand might lay me out!

628. IPH. A vain prayer is thine, O wretched man, whoso'er thou art; for she dwells afar off from this barbarian land. Notwithstanding, since thou art from Argos, of what 'tis possible to do indeed I will not omit the service. For I will place for thee many an ornament upon the tomb, and with yellow oil I will quench thy body, and the flower-distilled delight of the tawny mountain-bee I will cast on thy pyre.

636. But I will go and bring the tablet from the goddess' temple; howbeit take not the ill-will as mine. Guard them, attendants, without chains. Perchance unlooked for tidings shall I send to Argos to one of those dear to me, whom above all I love; and a tablet will report to him that they live whom he thinks to be dead, and will tell of joys to be believed.

643. CHO. I bewail thee, who art consigned to the blood-tinged sprinkling of lustrations.

OR. Why! This is not a thing for pity, but rejoice, stranger maidens.

CHO. But thee we congratulate on thy happy fortune, O youth, that thou wilt set foot upon thy fatherland.

PYL. Verily an unenviable lot for friends, when friends are dying!

SEMI-CHO. I. Ah, heart-rending errand!

SEMI-CHO. II. Alas! Alas! thou dost perish.

SEMI-CHO. I. Aiai! SEMI-CHO. II. Aiai!

CHO. Which of the two is the victim? For still my mind is distraught with conflicting doubts, whether it is thou, or rather thou, that in my wailing I am to bemoan.

OR. Pylades, tell me truly, hast thou had the same experience in thought as I?

PYL. I know not; thou askest me that I cannot answer.

660. OR. Who is the maiden? How like a Greek she asked us of the toils at Ilium and the Achaeans' return, and Calchas, wise in birds of omen, and Achilles' name, and the wretched Agamemnon—how she pitied and asked me of his wife and children! The stranger is by birth from thence—some Argive woman; for else she had never tried to send a tablet and sought to learn these tidings, as though, if Argos prospers, she prospers with it.

PYL. Thou hast been but a little before me; and thou art beforehand in saying the same as I except one thing: for a king's disasters, let me tell thee, all know who have had any intercourse with men. But she discoursed also of another matter.

OR. What? By putting it into the common stock thou wilt comprehend it better.

674. PYL. When thou diest it is shameful that I should see the light; as partner with thee I sailed, so it becomes me as partner also with thee to die; for I shall possess a name for both cowardice and baseness at Argos and in the Phocians' land of many a dell, and shall seem to the many—for many are base—by betraying thee to have got safe home myself alone, or even to have sought occasion against thee when thy house was plague-stricken, and plotted thy death for the sake of thy kingdom, for they will say I am the husband of the heiress, even thy sister. This then I fear and regard with shame, and there is no way for me but to be bound, to breathe my last breath with thee and to be slaughtered with thee and to have my body burnt, being thy friend and fearing blame.

687. OR. Utter words of good omen! My woes I must bear; and when I may bear single griefs I will not bear double. For what thou speakest of as grievous and reproachful is both of these to me, if I shall be the death of thee who bearest thy toils with me; for as regards my own lot it is not ill for me, faring as I fare at the hands of the gods, to quit life.

But thou art prosperous, and hast a home unstained

not plague-stricken, while mine is impious and ill-fated. But if thou shouldst be saved, and get children by my sister, whom I gave to thee to have to wife, my name would live on, nor would my father's house ever be blotted out as childless.

699. Nay, go and live on and dwell in my father's house. And when thou comest to Hellas, and to Argos, city of steeds, by this right hand I charge thee thus: both pile a tomb and set on it a monument for me, and let my sister give tears and locks of hair to my grave. And report how hallowed by blood at the altar I perished by the hand of some Argive woman. And never betray my sister, seeing forlorn thy new family, forlorn my father's house. And fare thee well; for I have found thee dearest of my friends, O thou who didst share my hunting and my nurture, thou who barest many burdens of my ills.

But Phoebus, seer as he is, deceived me; and putting forth his cunning, drove me as far as might be from Hellas through shame at his former prophecies; to him I gave all that was mine and hearkened to his words; and now, after slaying my mother, I find in return ruin for myself.

716. PYL. There shall be a tomb for thee, and thy sister's bed I will not betray, unhappy friend, since I hold thee dear when dead more than while thou lookest on the light.

But not yet has the god's uttered oracle destroyed thee, though thou standest near to slaughter. But there is—yes there is ill-luck beyond measure, which beyond measure brings a change whenever it may chance.

OR. Be silent: thoughts of Phoebus help me nought: for here is the lady coming forth from her dwelling.

725. IPH. (*entering with the tablet*). Go ye away, and going, make all inside ready for those who are set over the slaughter. Here, strangers, are the many-leaved foldings of the writing-tablet; and what I wish besides this, hear. No man is the same both in troubles and when he passes suddenly from fear to boldness. And I dread lest, on returning from this land, he who is about to bear

this tablet to Argos should count my commissions for nought.

OR. What, then, dost thou wish? On what account art thou at a loss?

IPH. Let him give me an oath that he will convey these writings over sea to Argos, to those of my friends to whom I wish to send them.

OR. Surely thou wilt also give my friend the same pledges in return?

IPH. What thing to do or refrain from doing? Speak.

OR. To send him away from this barbarian land and not to slay him.

740. IPH. A just thing hast thou said; for how otherwise could he bear the message?

OR. Will the sovereign, too, agree to this?

IPH. Yes, I will persuade him, and will myself put your friend on board the ship.

OR. (*to Pyl.*) Swear, and (*to Iph.*) do thou dictate an oath, any that is holy.

IPH. I will give, he ought to say, this to thy friends.

PYL. To thy friends I will give up these writings.

IPH. And I will send thee safely beyond the dark rock.

PYL. Whom of the gods dost thou then invoke to ratify these words?

IPH. Artemis, in whose halls I hold my office.

PYL. Yes, and I the king of heaven, awful Zeus.

IPH. But if thou shouldst forsake thy oath, and wrong me?

PYL. May I have no return home! But what of thee, if thou save me not?

IPH. Never may I set foot in Argos while I live.

PYL. But hear, now, from me a thing we overlooked.

IPH. Well, nothing comes amiss, so it be to the purpose.

PYL. Make this exception for me: if the ship come to harm, and the tablet in the billow is lost to sight along with the cargo, and I come off safe with nothing but my life, that this oath be no longer binding.

759. IPH. But know'st thou what I will do? for many means reach many ends. What is herein and written in the tablet's folds I will tell thee orally, so that thou canst report all to my friends. For this is on the safe side. If

indeed thou bring'st the writing safely home, it will tell, though silent, what is written here; but if these writings are lost to sight in the sea, by saving thy life thou wilt save the message for me.

PYL. Well hast thou spoken, both for thy concerns and for me. But reveal to whom I must bring these messages at Argos, and what I must say in thy name.

IPH. Tell Orestes, Agamemnon's son: "She that was slaughtered at Aulis sends this behest, Iphigenia, living, yet living no more in the eyes of those who dwell yonder."

OR. And where is she? Is she that was dead come back?

IPH. I here whom thou seest: put me not out by talking. "Convey me home to Argos, O my own brother, before I die, from a barbarous land, and remove me from the goddess' sacrifices, wherein I hold the office of slaying strangers."

777. OR. Pylades, what shall I say? In what strange hap have we now found ourselves?

IPH. "Or I shall prove a curse to thy house, Orestes," that thou mayest learn the name by hearing it again a second time.

PYL. Ye gods!

IPH. Why dost thou call upon the gods in my concerns?

PYL. 'Tis naught, but proceed; for I was gone away elsewhere. [Perhaps, then, in asking thee questions I shall arrive at things untrustworthy.]

IPH. Say that the goddess Artemis saved me, and put in my place a deer, which my father offered, deeming that he had thrust the keen blade into me; and she settled me in this land. These are the messages; this is what is written on the tablets.

788. PYL. O, thou who hast bound me with oaths easy to keep and hast sworn most excellently, no long time will I hold back, but we will make fast and sure the oath that I swore. (*To Or.*) Look, I bring thee a tablet, and deliver it, Orestes, from thy sister here!

OR. I receive it; and letting go the letter's folds, I will take my pleasure not in words first. O, sister dearest to

me, though astounded, yet clasping thee with a scarce-trusting arm, I will haste to delight, having learnt a tale so wonderful to me.

798. CHO. Stranger, not rightly dost thou defile the goddess' handmaid, casting thy hands about robes forbidden to the touch.

OR. O thou, own sister, and born of the same father Agamemnon, do not turn away from me now thou hast a brother, though not thinking that thou wouldest ever find one.

IPH. I have thee for my brother? Wilt thou not cease talking? Why, Argos is full of him, and Nauplia.

OR. 'Tis not there thy brother is, poor soul!

IPH. Nay, but did the Laconian daughter of Tyn-dareus really bear thee?

OR. Yes, to the son of Pelops' son; from him am I born.

IPH. What sayest thou? Hast thou any token of these things for me?

OR. I have; ask somewhat from the story of my father's house.

810. IPH. Then it behoves thee indeed to speak, and me to learn.

OR. I will tell thee first by hearsay from Electra this. Thou mind'st a strife that arose between Atreus and Thyestes?

IPH. I have heard it, what time there was a strife about a golden lamb.

OR. Dost thou mind, then, that thou didst weave this story in webs fine-wrought?

IPH. O, dearest, thou art wheeling near my thoughts.

OR. And a picture in the web, the shifting of the sun?

IPH. I wove this figure also in fine thread-plaits.

OR. And did'st thou receive bath-water from my mother to take to Aulis?

IPH. I mind it, for the marriage, being so good a one, did not deprive me thereof.

820. OR. Well, then, thou mindest giving thy hair to be taken home for thy mother?

IPH. Yea, for a memorial for the tomb in place of my body.

OR. Now the tokens which I saw myself, these will I tell: the ancient lance of our father Pelops in our home, that he brandished and so won the virgin of Pisa, Hippodamia, by killing Oenomaus—a lance hidden in thy maiden chambers.

IPH. O, most dear one, nought else, for thou art most dear: I have thee Orestes, the well-beloved, from Argos, from thy native earth, my dear one—

831. OR. And I thee, the dead, as is thought. And tears and joyful weeping bedew thine eyes, and in like manner mine.

IPH. —whom still a babe I left, left young in a nurse's arms, young in the house. O, my life, thou that hast met with fortune too good for words, what am I to say? This has befallen us beyond all wonders, and far in advance of reckoning.

841. OR. Henceforth may we have happiness together!

IPH. A strange pleasure have I gained, my friends; and I fear lest from my hands he should fly aloft to the sky and escape me. O Cyclopean hearth! O my country! Ah dear Mycenae, thanks do I feel for his life, thanks for his rearing, because thou didst rear up for me my brother here—a light to our home.

OR. In our birth, indeed, are we happy; but in our fortunes, my sister, was our life framed for sorrow.

IPH. I remember to my misery the time when my father, with miserable intent, laid the knife upon my neck.

OR. Ah me! For methinks though I was absent yet I see thee there.

IPH. When without the nuptial song, my kinsman, I was being led to Achilles' pretended marriage couch. And beside the altar were tears and groans. Alas! alas for the lustrations there!

862. OR. I too cry, ah me! at the hardy deed my father dared.

IPH. To a fatherless lot, to a fatherless lot was I destined; but from one mishap another arises by the chance some deity deals out.

OR. Yes, if thou hadst cut off thy brother, wretched sister!

IPH. O unhappy in my dreadful daring ! Dreadful things I dared ; dreadful things I dared ! Ah me ! my kinsman, and but by a little didst thou escape unholy destruction by slaughter at my hands. And the end that will follow upon it all—what will it be ? What chance will befall me herewith ? What passage shall I achieve for thee back again, and send thee away from a city of murder to thy native country of Argos, before the sword draws near thy life-blood ? This, this is thy task, wretched soul, to devise. Whether shall it be on dry land, not by a ship, but by the quick pulse of feet ?

886. Thou wilt come near to death in that case, passing through barbarous tribes and along roads that are no roads. Yet, through the dark rocks of the strait, long are the paths for flight in ships. Ah wretched, wretched soul ! Who, then, unhappy man, or god or mortal, or what unexpected chance, shall work a passage out of this impasse and release from troubles for the only two of Atreus' house.

900. CHO. Among marvels and beyond the bounds of fables are these things that I have seen with my own eyes, and shall tell of not from hearsay.

PYL. That friends, when they are come into the sight of friends, Orestes, should throw their arms about each other is seemly ; but, thou must cease from pitiful cries, and come to this thought too, how we may win the glorious light of safety, and fare out of the barbarian land. For this is the way of wise men, not to forsake present fortune when they have found their opportunity, and seize irrelevant delights.

OR. Well hast thou spoken ; but methinks fortune cares for this as well as we, and if a man is prompt in spirit, the heavens aid is more like to be strong.

IPH. But at least thou wilt not stay me nor debar me from my purpose to ask first what fate in life Electra has found, for all I can learn will be dear to me.

915. OR. 'Tis with this man she dwells, owning a happy life.

IPH. And your friend—of what country is he, and whose son ?

OR. Strophius, the Phocian, is well known as his father.

IPH. Yes; this must be the son of Atreus' daughter, my kinsman?

OR. Yes; thy cousin, the only undoubted friend to me.

IPH. This man as yet was not when my father would have slain me.

OR. He was not; for Strophius was long childless.

IPH. Hail, I greet thee, husband of my sister!

OR. Yes; and my saviour, not my kinsman only!

IPH. But the dreadful deeds about our mother—how didst thou dare them?

OR. Let us be silent about them: I was taking vengeance for my father.

IPH. And for what cause was she the slayer of her husband?

OR. Let pass our mother's deeds, not even for thee is it good to hear them.

IPH. I am silent. So Argos now looks to thee?

OR. Menelaus is lord; I am an exile from my native land.

IPH. It cannot be that my uncle has flouted the plague-stricken house?

OR. No; but dread of the Erinyes drives me from the land.

IPH. Was this, then, the madness which here also thou wast said to suffer, even upon the shore?

OR. Yes; we were seen, though not now for the first time, in sad plight.

IPH. I understand, for our mother's sake the goddesses were harrying thee.

OR. Ay, so as to put a bloody bit in my mouth.

IPH. But say, why didst thou then guide thy steps to this land?

OR. Bidden by Phoebus' oracles did I come.

IPH. To work what purpose? Utterable, or buried in silence?

939. OR. I will tell thee. And this is the beginning of many toils for me. When the crime about my mother that we speak not of had been accomplished by me, by the

pursuit of the Erinyes I was driven an exile, until Loxias directed my feet at last to Athens, to stand my trial on the charges of the unnamed goddesses. For there is a holy tribunal, which, men say, Zeus once set up for Ares for some defilement of his hands.

947. And when I came thither at first, indeed, no one of strangers willingly received me, as a man hated by the gods; but they who felt shame yielded me a stranger's fare at a table alone, though being under the same house-roof; but by their silence they contrived that I should be barred from converse also, that I might be set apart from their feasting and drinking, and into a separate vessel they filled for all an equal measure of the draught of Bacchus, and so took their pleasure. And I did not presume to question the strangers, but I bore my pain in silence, and seemed to mark it not, groaning deeply, because I was a mother's murderer. And I hear that my unhappy plight has been made a festal rite for the Athenians, and that still the custom remains for Pallas' folk to hold in honour the vessel that holds the measure of a pitcher.

961. But when I had come to Ares' hill, and stood for trial, I laying hold on one block, but the other she who was elder of the Erinyes, after I had spoken and heard my accusers respecting my mother's blood, Phoebus saved me, being my witness; and Pallas with her arm counted off the votes for me, and I came off a winner in the trial for murder.

As many therefore as rested content with the decision, marked for themselves a temple to have hard by the tribunal itself; but as many of the Erinyes as did not submit to the decision, with restless racings kept driving me on for ever, until I came again to Phoebus' holy plain, and stretched before the shrine, not tasting food, I swore I would there cut life short and die if Phoebus would not save me, who was my undoing. Thereupon Phoebus uttered a voice from the golden tripod, and sent me hither to get the heaven-fallen image and to establish it in the land of Athens.

979. But the deliverence which he appointed for me, do thou help me to gain; for if we obtain the goddess's

image, I shall cease from my fits of madness, and convey thee in a many-oared bark, and will set thee in Mycenae again. But O beloved ! O sister dear ! deliver thy father's house, and get me safe away ; since all my cause is lost, and that of Pelops' race, if we get not the goddess' heaven-sent image.

CHO. Some dreadful wrath of the gods hath seethed up against the seed of Tantalus, and leads it through hardships.

989. IPH. The eager desire have I long had before thou camest hither to be at Argos and to look on thee, my kinsman. But I wish even what thou dost, to remove thee from troubles and, for I feel no wrath at him who slew me, to build up again my father's plague-stricken house. So should I free my hand from thy slaughter, and save our house beside ; but I fear how am I to escape the notice of the goddess and of the prince when he finds empty the stone pedestal of the image. Surely I shall die, what reason have I to give ?

But if these two things be done as one and at one time, if thou both gain the image, and take me on a ship with goodly stern, the adventure becomes glorious ; but parted from the image I perish indeed, while thou, arranging well thy lot, wilt accomplish thy return. Verily I shrink not at all not even if needs be that I die, if I can save thee ; for it cannot be but that a man is missed out of the house when he has died, but a woman's power is weakly.

1007. OR. I would not be my mother's murderer and thine too. Sufficient is her blood. But with thee I should wish to live, and in death to meet an equal lot. (But I will take thee, if I do not myself fall here, to our home ; or dying, I will abide with thee.) Now hear my decision : if this was hard for Artemis to brook, how would Loxias have given the divine command to carry the goddess' image to Pallas' town ? . . . And to look upon thy face ? For by grouping all these thoughts into one I have hope to gain my return.

IPH. How then can it come about that we may both not die, and get what we wish ? For herein our

return to our home is weak; and here matter for counsel lies before us.

1020. OR. Should we not be able then to slay the prince?

IPH. A dreadful deed is this thou hast named, for strangers to kill their host!

OR. But if it will save thee and me, it must be risked.

IPH. Thou couldst not, but I laud thy readiness.

OR. But what if thou wert to hide me stealthily in this temple?

IPH. Meanest thou that, having gained the darkness, we might perchance escape?

OR. Yes; for night is thieves' time, but truth's the light.

IPH. Within are guards of the temple, whose notice we shall not escape.

OR. Ah me! we are undone—how shall we be delivered?

IPH. Methinks I have a new contrivance.

OR. Of what sort? Share thy thought with me, that I too may learn it.

IPH. I will use thy troubles as a device.

OR. Ay, for women are clever at devising wiles.

1033. IPH. I shall say that thou hast come from Argos, a mother's murderer.

OR. Make use of my ills if thou art like to gain thereby.

IPH. We shall say that it is not lawful to sacrifice thee to the goddess.

OR. Alleging what cause? for I suspect something.

IPH. That thou art not pure, but I shall give to slaughter that which is holy.

OR. How then is the goddess' image the more like to be captured?

IPH. I shall be fain to purify thee in ocean's springs.

OR. There still remains in the temple the image for which we have made our voyage.

IPH. That too, I shall say, I desire to wash, since thou didst touch it.

OR. Where, tell me? Meanest thou the inflowing of the wet sea?

IPH. Where thy ship rides with hempen bridles.

OR. And wilt thou or another bear the image in his hands?

IPH. I shall; for to touch it is holy for me alone.

OR. And Pylades, our friend here, to what part of the deed of blood will he be assigned?

IPH. He shall be spoken of as having the same stain as thou on his hands.

OR. And wilt thou do this unknown to the king, or with his knowledge?

IPH. By persuading him by my words; for I should not else escape him.

OR. Well the ship at least with her well-measured beat of oars is hard by.

IPH. It must be thy care that all else shall go well.

1052. OR. One thing alone we lack, that these women help in hiding this plan. Come, entreat them, and find persuasive words; sure, a woman hath power for arousing pity, and the rest, perhaps, will all turn out well.

IPH. O, dearest women, to you I look, and my fortunes are in your hands, either to fare well, or to be naught, and to be bereft of my country, and of a dear brother and most dear kinsman!

1060. And first, indeed, let this begin my speech. We are women, a sex of kindly mind to one another, and most faithful to preserve matters of common concern. Keep silence for us, and work out with us our escape. An honourable thing of a truth it is, to have a loyal tongue. Now ye behold that one chance holds in its grasp three lives most dear—either a return to their native land, or to die. But I, when delivered, that thou too mayst perchance share my good fortune, will bring thee safe to Hellas. Nay, by thy right hand I entreat thee—and thee, too—and thee by thy dear cheek and kisses, and by those most dear at home [mother, and father and children, if any have them].

What say ye? Who of you says ay? or who refuses this service? Speak. For, if ye approve not my words, both I am undone and my unhappy brother.

1075. Cho. Take heart, dear mistress, and only save thyself; for by me all things shall be kept in silence—great Zeus be my witness—wherein thou chargest me.

IPH. A blessing on you for your words, and may ye be happy ! Thy task it is at once, and thine, to go into the halls ; for straightway will the lord of this land be here enquiring whether the sacrifice of the strangers has been accomplished.

[*Exeunt ORESTES and PYLADES.*]

Thou august queen, who at Aulis' bays didst deliver me from a dread father's murderous hand, now also deliver me and these ; else will the utterance of Loxias' lips find credence no more among men by thy doing. But with gracious mind fare forth from a foreign land to Athens ; for here it becomes thee not to dwell, when thou mayst occupy a city blessed of heaven.

[*Exit IPHIGENIA.*]

1089. CHO. Bird, that along the ocean's rocky ridges, haleyon, that singest a dirge over thy fate, a cry well known to those who know how that thou ever hymnest thy spouse in thy strains, I match my laments with thine, I that would be a bird, but am wingless, longing for the assemblies of the Hellenes, longing for Artemis, goddess of childbirth, who dwells beside Cynthus' hill, and the soft-tressed palm, and the full-sprouting bay, and the sacred shoot of gray-green olive dear to Latona's travail, and the lake that rolls its water in a ring where the tuneful swan waits upon the Muses.

1106. Ah ! the many streams of tears that fell upon my cheeks when, as our bulwarks were broken down, I was carried away on board their ships, by the oars and lances of our foemen ! And by way of golden traffic I went on a journey to a strange land, where I serve the virgin priestess of the deer-slaying goddess, even the daughter of Agamemnon, and the altars where no sheep are sacrificed, envying him who is ill-starred all his life ; for in sore straits he grows not weary, since he is a foster-brother to ill-fortune from of old ; but to be brought to evil plight after good fortune is for mortals a life of grievous woe.

1123. And thee, indeed, august mistress, an Argive bark with fifty oars will take home ; and with its whistle the wax-bound reed of mountain Pan will urge on the oars ; and Phoebus the seer, lord of the music of the seven-stringed lute, will conduct them to the Athenians' bright

land, making melody. But having left me here, thou wilt go with the foaming oars, and with the breeze the sheets will spread out the sails upon the forestays at the prow, above the bows of the ship as she speeds swiftly.

1138. Oh, might I go on a bright course, where travels the fair light of the sun! and over my own bowers might I cease plying my wings folding them behind me ! And oh! might I stand in the dances, where also as a bridesmaid at fair-seeming weddings, whirling my foot away from my dear mother's side to the joyous bands of my companions, hastening into friendly rivalry of charms, and into strife of rich and graceful ornament, throwing my many-coloured veil and curls around my cheeks, I used to shade them !

Enter THOAS.

1152. THOAS. Where is the warden of these halls, the Greek lady ? Hath she already cut the first lock from the strangers ? Are their bodies blazing with fire within the holy precincts ?

Cho. Here she is, who will tell thee all plainly, O king.

Enter IPHIGENIA.

Tho. Ah ! Why, O daughter of Agamemnon, dost thou lift from the inviolable pedestal this image of the goddess in thine arms ?

1159. IPH. King ! stay thy foot where thou art in the vestibule.

Tho. Why ? What strange thing is there, Iphigenia, in the temple ?

IPH. Abomination ! For I utter this word for religion's sake.

Tho. What new thing dost thou preface with this cry ? Tell it forth plainly.

IPH. Unclean do I find the victims ye caught, O king !

Tho. What is it that told thee of this ? Or dost thou tell of a conjecture ?

IPH. The image of the goddess turned backwards from its place.

THO. Of its own motion? Or did an earthquake turn it?

IPH. Of its own motion; and it shut fast the sight of its eyes.

THO. And the cause, what is it? Or is it the pollution of the strangers?

IPH. As thou sayest, nought else; for they twain have done dreadful deeds.

THO. Can it be that they have killed some foreigner on the shore?

IPH. 'Tis of their home, the murder-stain they came with.

THO. What? For I have fallen into a desire of learning the tale.

IPH. Together with the sword they laid their mother low.

THO. Apollo! Not even among barbarians would any man have ventured it.

IPH. They were chased by pursuit from all Hellas.

THO. Is it for this, tell me, thou bearest the image out of doors.

IPH. Yes, into the holy air, that I may remove it from defilement of blood.

THO. And the pollution of the strangers, how did'st thou learn it?

IPH. I put questions when the goddess' image turned away backwards.

1180. THO. Hellas reared thee to be a clever maiden, since thou didst perceive it right well.

IPH. And but now they let down a pleasant bait for my fancy.

THO. Did they report some of the news from Argos as a lure for thee?

IPH. They said that Orestes my only brother, has good luck.

THO. Assuredly, that thou mightest deliver them through delight at their tidings.

IPH. Yes; and that my father lives and fares well.

THO. But thou didst lean to the goddess' side naturally.

IPH. Yes, in my hate of all Hellas, which was my undoing.

THO. What then are we to do, say, about the strangers?

IPH. Needs must that we respect the law that is ordained.

Tho. Are not thy lustral waters and thy knife employed ?

IPH. With pure cleansing first I intend to lave them.

Tho. With springs of water or with the sea-dew ?

IPH. The sea washes away all human ills.

Tho. So at least in more holy guise they will fall in honour of the goddess.

IPH. Yes, and mine own part too will thus be better.

Tho. Does not the billow dash up close to the temple ?

IPH. A lonely spot we need ; for we shall perform other rites.

Tho. Take them where thou wishest ; I love not to look upon forbidden things.

1199. IPH. I must purify also the image of the goddess.

Tho. Yes, so surely as the stain of a mother's murder has stricken it.

IPH. For else had I not lifted it from the pedestal.

Tho. Just is thy devoutness and thy forethought.

IPH. Thou knowest what I would fain have done ?

Tho. Thine it is to signify this.

IPH. Lay bonds upon the strangers.

Tho. Why ! whither could they flee from thee ?

IPH. Of honour Hellas knows nought.

Tho. Go for the bonds, attendants.

IPH. And let them also bring out the strangers hither.

Tho. This shall be.

IPH. First covering their heads with robes.

Tho. In face of the sun's flame.

IPH. And send with me some of thy followers.

Tho. These shall accompany thee.

IPH. And send someone to bear news to the city—

Tho. What shall they say ?

IPH. —that all abide in their dwellings.

Tho. Lest they come in the way of the murder-stain ?

IPH. Yes ; for all such are polluted.

Tho. Go thou and give the word.

IPH. That no one comes near to view.

Tho. Right well thou carest for the city.

IPH. Yes, and for those of my friends for whom it is most right.

THO. This thou saidst with thought of me.

[IPH. And with good reason.

THO. As with good reason all the city marvels at thee.]

IPH. And do thou, abiding here in front of the shrine in the goddess' honour,—

THO. What thing am I to do?

IPH. —purify the chamber with a brand.

THO. That it may be purified when thou enterest in at thy return?

IPH. Yes; and at the moment the strangers pass outside—

THO. What should I do?

IPH. —put a covering before thine eyes.

THO. That I do not catch pollution?

IPH. And if I seem to linger too long—

THO. For this what limit have I?

IPH. —do not wonder at all.

THO. Perform the goddess' rites at leisure perfectly.

IPH. Would that this purification may fall out as I wish!

THO. I join in thy prayer.

Enter ORESTES and PYLADES.

1222. IPH. Here, then, I see already coming out of the temple the strangers and the goddess' array, and the new-born lambs, that with blood I may wash away the blood of pollution; and I behold the torch's gleam and all other offerings that I prescribed as a purification for the strangers and the goddess. And out of the way of this pollution do I bid the citizens keep, if anyone either being the temple's doorkeeper keeps his hands clean for the gods, or purposes to tie the knot of wedlock, or is weighed down with child-birth; flee, remove yourselves afar, lest this pollution light on anyone. O virgin queen, Zeus and Leto's child, if I wash away these men's guilt of murder and offer sacrifice where 'tis due, thou shalt dwell in a pure abode, and we shall be fortunate; and the rest though I speak it not, nevertheless I reveal it to the gods who know the more, and to thee, O goddess!

[*Exeunt IPHIGENIA, ORESTES and PYLADES with attendants, left, THOAS enters the Temple.*

1234. Cho. Fairborn is the offspring of Leto, whom she bore of old in Delos' fertile plains, with golden hair and skilled in the lyre and in straight shooting with the bow wherein he delights, and brought him yet a babe from the seaborne ridge, leaving her famed chililing-place for the mother of gushing streams, Parnassus' peak that holds revel for Dionysus; where the dark-hued dragon with streaked back, gleaming in bronze amid the shady leafy bay, Earth's monstrous prodigy, erst guarded Earth's oracle. Him still, yes, still a babe, still in thy dear mother's arms leaping up thou didst slay, O Phoebus, and didst come to preside over the divine oracles, and on golden tripod dost thou sit on a throne that cannot lie, distributing to mortals thy oracle of things divine from beneath the shrine, dwelling near Castalia's streams, holding earth's central hall.

1259. And when Apollo went and removed from the seat of divine oracles Gaea's daughter Themis, Earth brought forth night visions of dreams which on the darksome couches of slumber upon the ground told to many a man both the past and the future, even all that was to be; and Gaea took away from Phoebus the honour of his oracles from jealousy for her daughter. But with swift foot hieing to Olympus, the lord twined his child's hand on the throne of Zeus, praying him to take away from the halls of Pytho the wrath of the Earth-goddess and the voices of nightly visions. And Zeus smiled, because the child had come forthwith set upon gaining a worship teeming with gold; and he shook his hair in assent thereto and checked the nightly dreams, and took from mortals night-inspired forgetfulness, and restored his honours to Loxias, and on the throne with its crowds of strangers he restored confidence to mortals by the strains of oracles.

Enter MESSENGER.

1284. MESSENGER. O wardens of the temple and priests who minister at the altar, whither is Thoas, king of this land, departed? Fold back the well-clamped gates, and call forth from these halls the lord of the land.

CHO. What is afoot, if it is right for me to speak unbidden?

MESS. The two youths are departed and gone by the scheming of Agamemnon's daughter, fleeing from this land and taking the awful image in the bosom of a Greek ship.

CHO. Ill to believe is the tale thou tellest; but he whom thou wishest to see, the king of the country, is gone, sped out of the temple.

MESS. Whither? For he must needs know what is doing.

CHO. We know not; but go and follow him where thou shalt find him and report these tales.

MESS. Lo, how untrustworthy is the race of women! Ye, too, have a share in the deed.

CHO. Art thou mad? And what have we to do with the strangers' escape? Begone to the rulers' doors with all thy speed.

1302. MESS. No, not before the guardian tells me this word, whether the chief ruler of the land is within or not. Ho, there! loose the bolts! I speak to you within; and tell my lord that I am here at the gates announcing a budget of new troubles.

Enter THOAS from the temple.

THO. Who sets up a shout around the goddess' abode here, battering the doors and sending a din within?

MESS. These women were giving out, being fain to drive me from the house, that thou wast without, and thou wast after all within the house.

THO. What gain did they look for therein, or pursue?

1312. MESS. Hereafter I will reveal these women's wiles; but do thou hear what is even now at hand: the maiden who here attended on the altars, Iphigenia, is gone forth from the land with the strangers, taking the goddess' awful image, and the purifications were but a trick.

THO. How sayst thou? What gale of fortune moved her?

MESS. She was striving to save Orestes; for herein thou wilt marvel.

Tho. What! Orestes! Surely not him of whom Tyndareus' daughter is the mother?

MESS. Him whom the goddess caused to be consecrated at these altars.

Tho. Oh, wonderful, what greater name can I rightly give?

MESS. Turn not thy mind to that, but hear me; and looking clearly, while thou clearly hearest, devise a pursuit that shall overtake the strangers.

Tho. Speak, for thou hast said well; for 'tis no near voyage along whose course they flee, that they should escape my spear.

1327. MESS. When we came to the sea-cliffs, where Orestes' ship was anchored in secret, Agamemnon's daughter motioned us whom thou didst send with her holding the strangers' bonds to stand afar off, as in act to offer the mystic flame and purification for which she came, while she alone walked behind holding in her hands the strangers' bonds. And these things were suspicious, 'tis true; yet did they satisfy thy servants, O king. And after a while, that they might truly seem to us to be doing something of import, she raised a cry, and kept chanting foreign strains in her witchcraft, as if, forsooth, washing away the blood-stain.

1339. But when we had been sitting a long time, misgivings came over us that the strangers, getting loose, might kill her and be gone as runaways; but from fear to see what we ought not, we sat still in silence; but at last all had the same mind to go where they were, although forbidden.

1345. And there we see the hull of a Greek ship, its broadside winged with well-fitting oar-blades, and fifty sailors with their oars on the thole-pins and the young men, free from bonds, standing astern of the ship. And with poles they were steadying the prow, and others were fastening the anchor from the bulwarks, and others hastened to bring a ladder as they hauled in the stern-cables through their hands, and, putting it into the sea, were letting it down to the strangers.

1354. But we, recking not what might befall when we saw their crafty wiles, kept hold upon the stranger lady and the stern cables, and through the rudder ports we essayed to pull out the steering oars of the high-pooped ship. ¶ And words kept passing : “ On what pretence are you stealing and carrying over sea images and priestesses from our land ? Whose son, and who art thou, that art smuggling the lady here from our country ? ” And he said, “ Orestes, her brother, that thou mayst know Agamemnon’s son ; I am conveying home my sister here, now I have won her whom I lost from our home.” But none the less did we cling to the stranger lady, and strove to force her to come with us to thee ; and from this arose these dreadful blows on my cheeks. For both they had no steel in their hands, and we too none ; but blows from fists came crashing in, both the youths at once aimed their feet at our ribs and on our hearts, so that at one moment our limbs joined issue and gave in. And signed with dreadful seal-marks, we made in flight for the cliff’s brow, some having bleeding wounds on their head, others in their eyes ; and after posting ourselves on hillocks, we kept fighting with more caution, and throwing stones ; but bowmen stationed on the stern checked us ever with their arrows, so as to drive us back afar.

1379. And at this point, because a terrible billow drove the ship to land, and the maiden felt afraid to wet her foot, Orestes took her upon his left shoulder, and going into the sea, and springing on the ladder, he placed his sister within the well-benched ship, and the statue too that fell from heaven, the image of Zeus’ daughter. And from the midst of the ship sounded some cry : “ O mariners from Hellas’ land, seize the oar and whiten the foam, for we have the things for sake of which we sailed into the inhospitable passage within the Symplegades.”

1390. And they, crying out with a groaning sound that was sweet music, smote the brine, and the ship, as long indeed as it was within the harbour, made way ; but as it passed the mouth it fell in with a huge billow and was distressed, for a terrible wind coming suddenly, ever drove the hull stern foremost ; but they held out, struggling against

the waves; but a back-flowing billow drove the ship again to land, and Agamemnon's daughter stood and prayed: "O daughter of Leto, bring me, thy priestess, safe to Hellas from a barbarian land, and pardon my theft! Thou, too, lovest thy brother, goddess; so deem that I, too, love those of my blood." And the sailors sang a paean responsive to the maiden's prayers, fitting to the oar their arms, bare from the shoulder, at their leader's note.

1406. But more and more the vessel came upon the rocks; and one rushed on foot into the sea, and another strove to fasten twisted nooses to the ship. And I, indeed, at once was sent away hither to thee, to signify to thee, O king, the chances there.

1411. But go, taking bonds and nooses in thy hands; for if the swell becomes not calm, there is no hope of deliverance for the strangers. Now the ruler of the deep, awful Poseidon, both watches over Ilium, and is adverse to the sons of Pelops; and now it seems he will offer Agamemnon's son to thee and the citizens a prey for your hands, and the sister, too, who in the goddess' despite is proved false to the slaughter at Aulis, and has forgotten it.

1420. Cho. O luckless Iphigenia, with thy brother thou wilt die, coming again into thy masters' hands!

Tho. Ho! all ye citizens of this foreign land, will ye not up and throw the reins upon your steeds, and run along the cliffs and receive the wreckage of the Greek ship, and, speeding with the goddess on your side, hunt impious men? And will not ye others drag the swiftly faring ships to the deep, that in chase by sea and land we may catch them, and either hurl them down from the rugged rock, or impale their bodies on stakes.

But you women, the accomplices in these plots, hereafter, when I have gained leisure, we will put to penalty; but now, having the earnest task which is set before us, we will not stay idle.

Enter ATHENA.

1435. ATHENA. Whither, whither, dost thou conduct this pursuit, King Thoas? Hear these words from me

here, Athena. Stay from pursuing and from speeding forth thy army's flow; for fate-driven by the oracles of Loxias did Orestes come hither, and fleeing from the Erinyes' wrath, and fain to convey his sister to Argos, and to bring the holy image to my land thus winning a respite from his now present troubles.

To thee this tale is told by me; but for Orestes, whom thou thinkest to slay having caught him on the ocean surge, already Poseidon, in favour to me, is setting clear of billows the ridges of the sea, conveying him in his ship.

1446. And, learning my injunctions, Orestes, for thou hearest a goddess' voice though afar, fare on with the image and thy sister. And when thou comest to Athens, the god-built, there is a spot hard by the farthest bounds of the Attic land, neighbour to the ridge of Carystus, a sacred spot, Halae my people name it; there build a temple, and set thee up the image, recording the Tauric land and thy labours which thou didst toil, through to the end, roaming over Hellas under the Erinyes' stings. But as Artemis shall mortals for the future celebrate her, a Tauric goddess. And establish thou this custom: when the people keep high feast, to atone for thy slaughter, let them hold the knife to a man's throat and let forth blood, for religion's sake, and that the goddess may have her honours.

1462. But thee, Iphigenia, it behoves about the awful terraces of Brauron to be warden for this goddess, where also thou shalt lie buried after death: and as an offering to thee, they shall present fine-woven webs of robes, that women who rend their soul in birth-pangs leave behind them in their houses. And these Greek women I charge thee to send forth from the land . . . on account of a just decision; and I saved thee even before on Ares' hills by counting the votes as equal, Orestes; and this shall be a custom, that whoso receives equal votes shall gain his cause.

But convey thy sister home from the land, O son of Agamemnon, and thou, Thoas, be not wroth.

1476. Tho. Queen Athena, whoever hears and disobeys the words of the gods is not right-minded. And with

Orestes, if he has gone with the goddess' image, I am not wroth, nor with his sister. For what good is it to match one's self against the mighty gods? Let them go to thy land with the goddess' image, and may they establish the idol with good hap! But I will send these women too to happy Hellas, as thy command enjoins; and I will check the spear which I am raising against the strangers, and check the ships' oars, since this pleases thee, O goddess.

ATH. I approve; for necessity is master of thee, yea and of the gods.

1487. Go! Ye breezes, convey Agamemnon's son to Athens, and I will journey with them, keeping safe my sister's awful image.

CHO. Go with good fortune in the number of the saved, heaven-blest. But O, revered both among immortals and among mortals, Pallas Athene, we will do thus as thou biddest. For a right pleasant and unhoped-for utterance have I welcomed with my hearing.

O greatly revered victory, mayst thou control my life, and not cease to crown me!

[*Exeint.*]

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